

PART 306-5-Official Passports

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306-5.1 As a NOAA employee traveling to a foreign country on official business, am I required to obtain an official passport?

Yes. All NOAA employees traveling OCONUS on official business **must** obtain an official passport and official visas, if required, before leaving the United States. An official passport cannot be obtained for travel to Taiwan, and is not required for travel between the United States and U.S. territories. U.S. territories include American Samoa, Guam, Midway Islands, Puerto Rico, U.S. Virgin Islands, Northern Mariana Islands, and Wake Island. The NTO strongly urges employees to carry a certified birth certificate when traveling between the U.S. and U.S. territories to avoid unnecessary problems. However, if you have an official or personal passport, you are expected to use your official or personal passport instead of birth evidence.

306-5.2 What is the processing-time for official passports?

The processing-time for official passports is 4 to 6 weeks and is dictated by the Department of State (DOS). Passport applications submitted with less than 4-6 weeks processing-time **must** include an emergency justification letter addressed to the DOS, Chief of Passport Services. The emergency justification does not guarantee that the foreign travel package will be processed in time for travel.

306-5.3 Where do I obtain passport forms for official travel?

All passport forms (DS-11, DS-82, DS-19, DS-64) **must be completed on line** and printed on paper so the applicant can sign and date the application. Passport applications that print on more than one sheet of paper must be printed on one-sided sheets of paper and cannot be printed on one sheet of paper back-to-back.. Passport applications can be found at www.travel.state.gov/passport. Each on-line passport application contains a 2-D Barcode, which enables the DOS to populate encrypted data, filled out by the applicant, into their system. **NOTE:** NMFS employees must annotate “CRMF” and all other employees must annotate “CROA” in the “Mail Passport to” section of the application. All employees will indicate the following address in the “Mail Passport to” section of the application: NTO, 20020 Century Blvd, Suite 1C, Germantown, MD 20874. You will need to indicate your home address in the “Permanent Address” section of the application.

306-5.4 How do I apply for an official passport?

There is no charge for official passports since they are deemed no-fee passports. However, applicants who use the “DS-11, Application for Passport” may be charged a processing fee which is reimbursable via a travel voucher. If you expect to travel frequently, you may request a 48-page passport to accommodate the additional visa stamps. You may apply for an official passport in one of the following two ways:

- 1) “DS-11, Application for Passport,” is used if you have **never** been issued a passport (either personal or official), or if you have a passport that was issued **more** than 15 years ago. Once notified that the DS-11 will be used, the NTO will send you an original and a photocopy of a letter of authorization. You will need to apply in person at the nearest Passport Office, Clerk of the Circuit Court, or Federal District Court, and provide a photo ID, along with the following paperwork to a certified passport agent:
 - an original and photocopy of a letter of authorization provided by the NTO,
 - a “DS-11, Application for Passport” completed on-line and printed on one-sided sheets of paper and **cannot be signed until** you appear in person in front of a certified passport agent,
 - two passport-size photographs (2"x 2"), and
 - a birth certificate with a raised seal.

Once you are sworn in by a certified passport agent, all of the above mentioned paperwork will be express mailed to the DOS in Washington, D.C. for processing. Once complete, the DOS will forward the new official passport to the NTO. The NTO will express mail the passport to the traveler to be signed for future visas. Allow four to six weeks processing time for DS-11 forms (not including visas).

2) “DS-82, Passport Application by Mail,” is used if you have a passport (either personal or expired official) that was issued within the last 15 years. You will submit the following paperwork to the NTO:

- a DS-82 form which must be completed on-line and printed on one-sided sheets of paper (original signature and date required),
- two passport-size photographs (2"x 2"), and
- either a personal or official passport issued within the last 15 years.

The NTO will submit the above mentioned paperwork to the DOS for processing. Once complete, the DOS will forward the new official passport to the NTO. The NTO will express mail the passport to the traveler to be signed for future visas. Allow four weeks processing time for DS-82 forms (not including visas). NOTE: Any personal documentation, such as a personal passport, an expired official passport, or a birth certificate used in this process will be returned to the traveler upon completion of the travel package.

306-5.5 What are the passport photo requirements?

Passport photos **must** be 2" x 2" (excluding white borders), and must have a white or off-white background. The applicant’s image must be centered in the photograph with a 1/2" space between the top of the applicant’s head and the top edge of the photograph. Pictures must be cut down to correct size and must match the template provided on the passport application. Pictures not in conformation will be rejected. See the following DOS website for further information:
www.travel.state.gov/passport .

306-5.6 What form do I use when I need to make changes to my official passport?

For passport changes, you will submit a “DS-19, Passport Amendment/Validation Application” which must be completed on-line and printed on one-sided sheets of paper (original signature and date required), to the NTO along with the official passport. The DS-19 form is used to correct a name and/or descriptive data in the passport, to add visa supplement pages to the passport, or to extend the validity of a limited passport. The NTO will submit the above mentioned paperwork to the DOS for processing. Once complete, the DOS will forward the official passport with corrections to the NTO. Allow at least 4 weeks processing time for DS-19 forms (not including visas). **NOTE:** Descriptive data changes are shown on the back page of the passport.

306-5.7 What form do I use if my official passport is lost or stolen?

You must notify the NTO **immediately** if your official passport is lost or stolen. Once notified, the NTO will send you an original and a photocopy of a letter of authorization. You will need to reapply in person at the nearest Passport Office, Clerk of the Circuit Court, or Federal District Court. You will need to provide a photo ID and submit:

- an original and photocopy of a letter of authorization provided by the NTO,
- a “DS-64, Statement Regarding Lost or Stolen Passport”, completed on-line and printed on paper (original signature and date required),
- a “DS-11, Application for Passport” completed on-line and printed on one-sided sheets of paper and **cannot be signed** until you appear in person in front of a certified passport agent,
- a memo of explanation supported by police documentation (if possible),
- two passport-size photographs (2" x 2"), and
- a birth certificate with a raised seal.

Once you are sworn in by a certified passport agent, you will sign the DS-11, Passport Application form and all of the above mentioned paperwork will be express mailed to the DOS in Washington, D.C. for processing. Once complete, the DOS will forward the new official passport to the NTO. The NTO will express mail the passport to the traveler to be signed for future visas. Allow four to five weeks processing time for lost/stolen passports (not including visas).

NOTE: Passports issued via the lost/stolen form may be issued as a special, limited passport not to exceed one year and will need to be renewed via the DS-82 form prior to the end of the expiration date.

306-5.8 What do I do with my official passport when I return from official travel?

DOS security requirements dictate that all official passports be returned to the NTO for safekeeping in the official passport repository upon completion of foreign travel. Frequent foreign travelers or those on foreign blanket travel authorizations may retain official passports in a locked safe in their offices.

Official passports are the property of the Government, and are not the personal property of the traveler. Official passports must never be kept at home.

306-5.9 What do I do with my official passport upon leaving Government service?

Upon leaving Government service, employees **must** return all valid official passports to the NTO or NMFS for disposition. However, you may retain any invalid official passport.

306-5.10 Can I keep my official passport for a souvenir?

Yes. Employees who wish to retain their official passport for a souvenir must return their official passport with a memorandum of explanation to the NTO. The NTO will forward the official passport to the Department of State for cancellation. After cancellation, the official passport will be returned to the traveler for a souvenir.